

Tourism Workforce Assessment Forum
Sierra Vista
May 17, 2005

Discussion Topic 1: Recruitment, Retention & Succession

What non-traditional strategies do you use to recruit entry-level employees?

- Arizona government is a bureaucracy ...we have to go thru paperless hiring system. We're doing a lot of non-paper hiring/recruiting and this takes me out of the loop. I set the parameters, HR selects from resumes and we can pick the person now, less stringent on rule of three. I think it's fair. It's the entry-level
- Locally, for both entry and mgmt, the quality of life [here] makes it easier to attract people from other areas. It's a good sell
- Most entry level people come in, but they expect high wages. Years ago, these entry-level positions were learning positions, but now they need to support a family with these jobs. Changing expectations of entry-level work makes jobs harder to fill
- Employee referrals—we give financial rewards. The chamber offers a place on its site for members to post jobs at no cost. And people are going to them to find employees. Hcareers.com and monster are also good, expensive but good
- H careers is great in the restaurant industry

What non-traditional strategies do you use to recruit management employees?

- Trade journals, word of mouth, stealing from competitors... I was asked by a firm that was moving to town if I know of people that could fill specific positions
- We have a one-stop system where we place the info, which goes through partners and DES and then the job seekers will look them up. We find a lot of soldiers for contracts and temporary work
- We're having problems recruiting police officers and engineers, and other such careers in Sierra Vista. One problem we have is the pay for entry-level
- Need to find connectors, a person who gets info and passes it on. We have corporate clients, we pass the info on to customers and we help promote the grapevine communication

Besides wages, what factors contribute to employee turnover?

- Work ethic. Most people don't want to work. They think that coming in is the job and they do not want to do anything else. And we offer training and such and they don't come in
- I agree, but I also hear that there's poor management
- Bad bosses and lack of recognition from workers. It is more than a pat on the back. There's poor articulation of the job goals. And then the employees don't know what the expectations are and they are reprimanded
- We are looking at that in our office. Main thing is that employees don't feel invested in the company. They don't care about the success or failure of the company. They collect check and they don't stay to finish things, etc.
- Competition is fierce. Benefits and other things are making jobs more attractive
- In Sierra Vista, we found thru exit interviews that advancement within the career is minimal. Government has employees that have stayed for 15 years. There's not a lot of turnover so there's minimal opportunity to go ahead
- The young people don't care for the buy in; they are looking out for themselves
- 2.5% unemployment rate doesn't help, people can find another job quite easily

What are you doing/could you do to attract young people to consider a career in the tourism industry?

- Local high school holds an annual career day to show students different opportunities that exist around the world
- And the college hosts a job fair annually
- Young patrons in a restaurant, we give them tours to show them what careers exist. Having worked in union I see that playing an important role
- The image of this industry in Arizona is that it's a worthless job. There's no future
- I can foresee an apprenticeship partnership for college and high school to get people educated and give them entry-level positions to get to the management positions
- This happens in other locations but not in rural towns
- Most of our work is government contract and there's a limit to our rates. Despite our high occupancy is high, the rates are controlled. And that affects the salaries
- Our major export is our youth

How are you preparing employees for advancement in your organization?

- Benson went under a salary survey and we were able to work some new jobs into the system to make a path upward
- There's a problem with the education system, we need to expect more of our students. Go-getters get further along, while students who are status quo will not go far
- A flood of women are coming in to kitchens, prior to that it was difficult for a woman to get into the kitchen. This band of woman chefs has helped encourage women to look at this career. Race is another issue
- You see that in culinary programs. Now there's a spike of women owning restaurants
- Promoting jobs internally, we could do more of that
- We have many chain restaurants and they bring outside people in. do corporate structures working against their own best interests...

Are there jobs that a guest worker program would be especially well-suited to fill?

- Housekeeping, support workers
- Depends on skill levels
- Nursing homes
- Unskilled? Restaurant workers are seeing lots of undocumented worker but they need them—without them they wouldn't survive
- Last week congress put forth something that hopefully will start something, we need it
- What would be good aspects of the Guest Worker program that would address issues that are prevalent?
- I would hope to see what's in the McCain bill in addition to giving the right to work and other rights that anyone here has. Otherwise there's a tendency for exploitation
- We'd like to see registration, enforced and enforceable, I don't detect even on the border anything other than a legal issue. It is too complex and slow to meet the needs of this country. It has got to be workable

Discussion Topic 2: Industry Trends

How do changing travel preferences affect your workforce and training needs?

- We see a trend of different nationalities in Benson, so we can communicate with French, Germans, etc.
- Trace it to the value of the dollar. The United States is more affordable
- The important thing here is SV and Bisbee, etc. we see a lot of tourism dollars from Mexico. With the minute-men and 9-11 slowed our tourism from Mexico and impacted us. It's a major issue. If/When that open border happens, there will be a ripple affect on the economy
- We've moved to eco-tourism. We need to train our workforce to talk to these people
- We're seeing older travelers; we need to be prepared for their medical needs with first aid training and defibrillator training
- One travel preferences is that there are more RVs on the road. Our workforce cannot totally be affected by that
- A hunger for authenticity. There's a need for newness. People /employees need to be educated on these things, and activities and things that will interest them
- I think we have noticed that they prefer staying at smaller places/bed and breakfast. Bed & Breakfast owners are making a point to give them info on the area and give that more personalized services
- Employees should be visiting locations, so they should be informed and have had that experience

What other social trends (cultural, environmental, political, economic, demographic, etc.) do you anticipate impacting your industry?

- The big thing affecting hospitality is internet. Reservations, rental cars, restaurants. People will be checking in at kiosks
- This means that travelers have more access to info and travel and that changes their expectations and they have access 24hrs a day. We have to have a workforce that is computer literate and need to know that internet
- In Vegas, they've eliminated change girls, for example
- Especially where I'm involved is the bilingual people. Being so close to the border, we need Spanish. We appreciate when we get those services
- We've had lots of those travel experiences. We want more types of travel. We don't want to hop around; we want to know the places we visit. In a more stimulating way

What new jobs are emerging in your company or industry?

- Internet, we need IT professional
- Food, there's a revolution...you can get high quality food that's ready and good. Its saves labor costs so we can keep our prices down. A whole other level of operation. But we can do that in our county to eliminate expenses
- Fraud is a big issue now, people dealing with cash registers and there's a lot of fraud with it

- Use of credit sales was a difficult transition to make. Legislature frowns on that. Now we can use those machines without paying the fees. Accounts for 15-20% of my sales
- Merchandising is getting popular, and we increased sales cause of that
- Park rangers know a lot of info. Tombstone is second in Arizona to Grand Canyon. Employees don't know about Arizona. TV isn't educating people anymore. Don't find westerns on TV, it amazes us. Need to manage our identity crisis

Over the next five years, what jobs and job skills areas are being phased out from your company or industry?

- There are more small producers producing gourmet products than ever before. On the other hand, there are a number of chain restaurants that have saturated areas which squeeze smaller restaurants. Travel agents are on their way out
- They'd go into tourism, as a concierge or other positions
- Reservations, front desks, they are going to be gone. Lots of reservations are coming in through the internet. I think this will continue to increase. Technology is affecting everybody
- B&B, we still get the mix, but we still do a lot through the internet
- You can print out tickets on your own so you don't have to go through the stands or anything in London or here

What impact will aging of the workforce have on staffing in your industry?

- The pool of applicants goes up. At the parks the average age is 42, which may pose a problem eventually when heavy labor needs to do
- I find the older workers are more dedicated and are more loyal to their jobs
- Their needs are different. They're not looking into working up the ladder, and these needs make a difference. They have different goals
- Here in Cochise County, the backbone is retired workers. It's a volunteer/largely retired pool as a critical resource
- Repository of knowledge and these people transfer it to customers. The service may be slower
- We have training issues. Bisbee is doing mine tour training and they have personal experiences and the youngest is in the 40s and the oldest is the 80s. We won't be able to figure out how to get other people to understand how to relay this passion. So there's no pipeline to get employees up to speed on giving this experience
- Karchner Caverns has lots of volunteers but offers supplies to help them with living arrangement

What intergenerational issues affect your workforce?

- Lots of fights over music
- Clients are significantly older, but younger employees are good at their jobs... but most get away with it. We have younger people supervising older people. In most cases, the senior members accept their roles because they understand that it's support staff. But the professional is harder for those people to meet whereas the recreational area is a career
- There are needs with younger people that older people don't have, caring for younger kids, for example. But flexibility will be key. We need to accommodate
- I've got from 16 – 83, my 83 yr old can work circles around most of the 20 yr olds

Discussion Topic 3: Staff Development & Training

What are you currently doing to train and update the skills of your employees?

- Nothing's mentioned the cost involved in training and retraining and finding employees. Employers think they can just rehire someone and lots don't realize [how much is spent on recruiting and training]
- Poor service also affects it because you lose customers
- We have service videos and a training program. If there were something available through the college, I would send them here. But nothing is available. I'm trying to get the owner to take some core courses to learn about this industry and get retrained and get exposed to workers
- We offer to help train folks what I'm hearing is that we have some money and state has money for layoff aversion if you have a new technology we can help retrain folks with no cost to the employer. If it's a new business or customized training. It's our tax dollars
- For CCC, we have customized training that we can do that is either free or inexpensive to meet the communities' needs

What educational partnerships does your organization currently have, and how could these be improved?

- I don't know what's offered. In CA junior colleges send out info to businesses

- We don't take advantage of what CCC has, i know they are there. Need greater awareness
- Maybe it's just communicating, getting on the list for college to get the info out
- SV will pay 80% of your education and its not a partnership, but it is available and does exist
- Members have a scholarship fund for AHILA up to \$1000 / yr that can be made available to employees to get them educated. And all the money is never fully used each year
- Thinking of working with DOC to get scholarship money to train employees. We have programs that will suit needs of employers, we just need to get the awareness out

What needs do you or your customers have that you are unable to meet because your employees don't have the necessary skills?

- Older people don't want internet or computers and they don't want training. Lots don't want general customer service training, and hospitality
- Loss of respect. Kids are no longer expected to be respectful
- Basic skills like dressing, showering, etiquette, language...
- Point system to reward employees and they have high retainment. You come late its - points, early you get + points. We have to be aware and have incentives to keep these young people. Not everyone wants to go to the city
- Workforce development training

What can be done to help prepare younger members of the workforce to appropriately service the needs of your customers?

- We need to make tourism a career. In other countries, people have to be certified. You have to have some training. That's an investment that would make you stay in that industry that you started. We need to work hard to make this a career and not just jobs
- Tattoos, no piercing, dress, it scares people and customers. Not everyone is as open-minded
- Sensitivity training. Formal, informal, age, gender race, all of those things. We need them to approach them fairly and equally
- Cultural competency is one of the areas that this would be good. And we're starting the program
- More of a focus of local history and offer kids in high school and college to learn about this
- Identify their strengths and have them understand that they won't learn as many new things but appreciate and use the skills they use
- Classes in modern American English
- Cultural competency is across the board
- They are more concerned with job security. Need to consider this
Security isn't much of an issue, but it is there after 9-11
- We have to put up accessible things out there and we are renovating areas to be accessible. Health issues are also important. A hospital health force is looking at aging issues. We're probably behind but we're starting on it
- We're altering history to make adjustments to be compliant, which stinks
- Everyone is required to take CPR and other first aid classes to address needs

How will technology affect your staff training and development?

- Government wants to be paperless, but we generate more paper than ever before. We could do this more effectively
- There's internet training
- We have an Ethernet and it people aren't on the road as much. They can log on and go thru my computer